Jacobins and disgruntled half-pay soldiery, had despatched an agent to dog his footsteps. The purpose may be imagined. Royalists and anarchists considered the First Consul vermin. Talleyrand was carrying water on both shoulders: the insiders of the administration styled him and Sieyes with their adherents the Orleanist party, scheming to put some member of that line on an ineffectual throne as a creature of the other monarchies. Lucien and the Bonaparte family began to discuss heredity and talk of a succession in the Consulate as in a kingdom. They gathered many adherents: Orleanists and Bonapartists alike counted on the possibility of the First Consul's death, either by assassination or in battle, on the still higher probability of his defeat. Death and defeat they considered were for him synonymous, all the plotters of every sort and condition forming plans to share in the contingent legacy of his overthrow. Victory alone could save the First Consul and his personal rule: to conquer in Italy was to reign supreme in France. The plain folk seem never to have doubted for a moment, and their instinct was true.

Heretofore we have seen in Bonaparte the general and the politician commingled, with the former preponderating; now we have carefully to distinguish not one but almost two men in the First Consul, as afterward in the Emperor — the statesman and the general. The former is henceforward always prominent, always in evidence; the latter often hides himself, and does his great work, in the service of the former. The conflict at Marengo was the first of the statesman's four decisive battles, and he knew it. It gave him the undisputed mastery of France. There never was a fight more carefully explained to a nation, both at the time and subsequently, than this one. There was real danger that the temporary check might obscure in the common mind